

J. A. LABADIE

THE

# UNREVEALED RELIGION.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered in Union Hall, Glenora, New York.  
January, 1891.

—BY—

J. K. INGALLS.

*Author of "Social Wealth," "Economic Equities,"  
"Land and Labor," "Periodical Business  
Crises," "Work and Wealth," Etc.*

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## THE UNREVEALED RELIGION.

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It has been attempted, many times from this platform to show that all things in the realm of physical nature, in animal life or in human consciousness and volition, are under the dominion of the law of growth and of decay. Given moral and religious susceptibilities, however conspicuous or obscure, increase or diminution of such susceptibility must be attained through a change by minute gradations, as the mind becomes opened or closed to the reception of truth, to the gathering of strength from exercise, and of wisdom from experience.

It does not affect this truth, that people sometimes make rapid progress or decline. One may be instantly converted to a new truth, like Saul of Tarsus, to outward appearance, and to the self-consciousness even; for growth is noiseless and may be unnoticed by one's self, till some crisis reveals our unrecognized change. The "new birth" of the mind, like the physical birth, may fail to impress itself upon the attention until long after it has taken place. But consider "conversion" under any light whatever, this development of the moral and religious sentiments is only explainable at all on the ground of an inherited or acquired capacity to receive truth and accept good, not from authoritative revelation, but from sources

wholly unrevealed through written or spoken language.

“ Were not the eye receptive of the sun,  
No sun for it could ever shine ;  
By nothing God-like could the heart be won,  
Were not the heart itself divine.”

I do not intend to discuss the merits of claimed revelations. For the present purpose we may treat the Bible as a revelation (a claim by the way it nowhere makes for itself) containing the will and word of God. Still it must be interpreted by the demonstrable and unuttered law of Nature. Indeed that which comes under the head of revealed words, comes to us through the capacities of human thought and susceptibility, to say nothing of the writing being done by human hands, and renderings of interpretations through human ingenuity and reason. For that can be no revelation which has not adaptation to the capacity to which it is made.

A question of vital importance arises here: Is the revealed word, whatever that may be, to determine and limit the demonstrations of human experience and investigation, or is the unrevealed or demonstrable truth or religion to serve as “a canon of interpretation” to what may be found written? Upon the answer to this simple question turns the decision we must make as to that attitude which the nominally Christian Church has occupied, for nearly the whole period of her existence. For early in her history she scornfully abandoned, if she ever embraced, the simple spirituality of Jesus, which makes experience the test of all faith and doctrine. He appealed to what is in Man, not to what was in books. These he often quoted to condemn by appeal to positive knowledge. The pure and spiritual he educed from the light of Nature, the sunshine and the rain and the upspringing germ.

The dictum of the Church on the other hand, at least since she aspired to temporal power, has



been authoritative and hierarchic. Whatever we owe to the humanizing influence associated with the memories of her reign, is due to the unrevealed truth which Jesus *lived*, and which has found expression in every age in and out of the church, through the lives of true and noble men.

The modern theologian admits the testimonies of Nature, and that there is a natural religion. He does not object to call nature an earlier revelation, which leads up to that more spiritual life and activity which distinguishes the morally religious now. His fallacy consists in supposing that a written, printed or spoken word has divine power in itself to elevate man's moral and religious being. He also errs in the order he assigns to these two partially independent sources of truth and good. The natural growth of exceptionally gifted or circumstanced individuals leads to the conception of theories and hypotheses, leading again to observation and experiment and practical realization. It is plain therefore that the theoretical or suppositious teaching through written words, or oral communication of necessity precedes the demonstrable or practical acceptance.

The writer of the first chapter of Genesis gave expression to an hypothesis of the origin or genesis of the external world and of man, which was followed with modifications by Jew, Christian and Mohammedan till within a few hundred years. It is wonderful that in general order and development it coincides to so great a degree with the "development theory" or evolution, which dominates scientific thought to-day. These theories are due mainly to the progress of demonstrable knowledge in the present century, and which has become the true interpreter of the ancient myth.

The same is true of the manner in which it was attempted to account for the existence of the rainbow, whether by the biographer of Noah, or by the equally beautiful Indian legend. Modern

science has interpreted that revelation, and shown by what unvarying laws "God has set his [or the great chieftain's] bow in the clouds." Thus science ever explains, confirms or corrects hypothesis, prophecy and revelation, in the moral and spiritual realm as well as in the physical. Man can make no attempt to practice any maxim or precept of morals or religion, but he brings it to the crucial test of its utility. He must by this interpret its doubtful meaning and prove its accordance with fact, or reject it as worthless.

The spirit of authority would make revelation the interpreter of fact. Genesis is to interpret geology, prophecy to determine history, and revelation to create realities. This is seen in the statements of the New Testament, where it is said things were made to occur that certain "scriptures might be fulfilled." I am sure that it is safe to say that if that was not the reason why the facts occurred, it was at least why they were said to have occurred. The facts were made to fit the prophecy, or the prophecy was made after the facts occurred.

To the test of practical experience, and the good resulting to mankind, all systems, hypotheses and revelations must be and in the end will be subjected. Brahmanism, Buddhism, Stoicism, Parseeism, Mohammedism, Judaism, Christism, Mormonism, or ism of any kind which can stand the test of the "greatest good" will ultimately prevail, or rather so much of either as is proved good by the test of experience. None fear but what the good in their peculiar system will continue; it is the evil they think they see in others that they fear. But time will set all things right, and make all things equally clear, which embrace the good.

I wish to digress here to say that I use the term Church not at all in the sense of a voluntary association for purposes of mutual improvement

and growth in the moral and spiritual life; nor of the consociation of such bodies in a wider union; unless it be for the purpose of compelling the credence of mankind; nor yet in the sense of a distinct body professing certain faiths and doctrines; to all such my criticisms of the church do not apply. I mean by church that spirit of hierarchy which claims powers derived from a supreme being with authority to exercise spiritual and temporal dominion over the world. In those countries where, as in most Christian nations, there is a union of Church and State, human freedom has little to hope for; but the history of the episcopacy and even of the presbytery is also full of enmity to free institutions. They are both monarchical and hostile to all exercise of honest thought and to the sovereignty of the individual man or woman. It is in the nature of all organized bodies to absorb vitality and strength from other forms.

As I pointed out to you a few weeks since, revealed religion is the teaching of truth: the form most available for the instruction of the infant mind. Hence it is usually symbolical. Allegories abound in it, like the story of the Garden of Eden. The trees assemble and choose the bramble bush to rule over them as king. Sacred dramas, like that of Job; of Jonah and the whale; of the three worthies walking in fire; the folk-lore of the Teutons and Scandinavians and the beautiful traditions of our Indians are illustrations. Again the parables of the Gospels are in point, in which it is said that Jesus "spoke not to them without parables at any time."

The Church has found it more favorable to her exercise of irresponsible and wily brutal power, to make allegories read like history, and to pass off parables for facts; to insist on a literal interpretation of assumed divine communications, which were originally given in highly figurative phrases; and to discredit science, the unrevealed or

demonstrable word of God, and to which man can only attain by patient investigation and practical experiment. God does nothing for us which we can do for ourselves.

I ought perhaps to more clearly explain what I mean by the term God, to whom I ascribe both word and work. I use it in no anthropomorphic sense. From the personification of Good and Evil, gods both benevolent and malevolent have been pictured to the human mind in human form, and with attributes, passions and impulses, which would subject them to all the limitations of our human nature. The fetisch, the idol, the god-man and the god-word are successively formed by the mental effort of the finite being man to grasp the incomprehensible, the unconditioned. I employ the term to signify that all-pervading Energy which is manifested in the movement of all worlds, all substance and all beings, and which impresses us as good or evil in proportion to our knowledge of and accord with the laws which govern motion, life, sense and thought. To those who intelligently seek the good in all things, the unknowable becomes personified as the "ever-living and true God."

To the spirit of fraternity and good will, evinced in the teaching and life of "the carpenter's son," we doubtless owe a tribute of grateful acknowledgement; but with the Church, which has prophesied and ruled in his name, humanity has a fearful balance in account. Her entire history for more than fourteen centuries can be traced step by step in the blood of slaughtered victims, in religious wars and in persecutions of every effort of men to obtain freedom in act or thought, and in a record of brutal cruelties, which have never been equalled for ingenious atrocity by any barbarians or savages.

It was her delight to plunder and spoil unbelievers and heretics. Torture of body by every

imaginable device, intensified and prolonged to the uttermost, was a usual means to the gratification of a voracious rancidity or of a more than diabolical revenge. Burnings, drownings, persecutions for simple opinion's sake, destruction of works of science, infliction of the death penalty for witchcraft and other wholly imaginary crimes, are some of the counts in that indictment against the hierarchical spirit which claims to be God-appointed and God-empowered. She imprisoned, tortured and openly murdered the apostles of science in all those ages who sought to make known to men those facts in being, those demonstrable truths of the universe and of life, not revealed in the fables and allegories adapted to the childhood of the race.

To maintain her supremacy and retain her tutelary power, she has set up authority as paramount to truth, fable to fact, discarded human experience and crucified human nature upon the altar of a gloomy superstition and a canting hypocrisy.

But we need to discrete all this from the spiritual teachings of the Nazarene. They have no rational connection with each other, and are allied only in the false claim the Church makes to be the interpreter of his life and doctrine, but with which in truth she has nothing in common.

That the Bible is a revelation of what is positive, or demonstrable truth, is not now contended by intelligent theologians. Some hundreds of different churches or communions interpret it in widely different ways. And some hundreds of thousands of priests, at immense cost to the people, are employed to explain weekly its proper meaning and application. The very claim of the Church to expound the Bible admits the necessity for a rule of interpretation. But *she* must be the interpreter! Without her glossary it is a book not to be studied or even read by the laity! The experience of mankind through unnumbered ages is held as nothing in comparison with her forced

interpretation of fables, allegories, parables and questionable history. The unrevealed "will of God" which is blazoned on every mountain top, heard in the murmuring breeze and moaning sea, seen in the opening bud and unfolding flower and felt in the sunshine and rain; all this is sheer impertinence in comparison with her traditions. These were transmitted orally for an indefinite period, then formed into fragmentary writings; then after many ages compiled with other fragments into a book and called Genesis, and this last, after hundreds of years more, was joined to other writings, traditional or historical and called the Pentateuch. After two or more intervals of hundreds of years each the Bible first appears in the Fourth Century in the form it wears to-day. The Catholic and Protestant versions differ widely still in other respects than about the apocrypha, and some of the churches attach to certain of its books much greater importance than to others. But all orthodox churches agree in this, that we must allow the revealed word to dominate science, the unrevealed or demonstrable truth or be damned. The testimonies of human experience, the aspirations of loving hearts and the spiritual intuitions of men must give place to its strained interpretations of a book, of the origin or authorship of which we have little satisfactory knowledge.

"The conflict of ages" has thus been prolonged between the Church and the man. The first a designing organized hierarchy, bent on perpetuating its power and prestige; the last with all his weaknesses and errors, struggling for life and liberty, a crucified one made worse, not better, by dogmatic teaching and forced subjection to authority. The Church has retained the shell and tradition of the spiritual things of the receding ages, but the real spirit of the primitive gospels has been mainly brought down to this age, by the heretics, dissenters, non-conformists, Baptists,

Quakers, Socinians, Universalists and Agnostics. Not an instance can be found in all history where the political rule of the Church has not resulted in the loss of civil liberty, in the degradation and degeneracy of the people.

To its rule we owe largely the subjection and dependent state of woman, from which she is only beginning to recover as the dawn of the Twentieth Century steals on. For the women of Greece, of the Tentons, Scandinavians and barbarians generally were honored and respected, and enjoyed far more equality of privilege than the Church has ever sanctioned. Asceticism and the celibacy of the priesthood and religious orders, is mainly her work. It has cursed the world for ages and is not now without its influence for evil. Reaction from this outrage against nature plunged both the Church and the world for hundreds of years into beastly sensuality, wholly unknown to savages. The clergy, and dignitaries of the Church, both Protestant and Catholic, were sunk in the grossest debaucheries. Natural sons of Popes and Cardinals were honored with stations in Church and State and imposed as rulers upon the people. In Luther's time it was common to peddle advance indulgences of the Church, not only for the most loathsome vices, but for heinous crimes not excepting robbery and murder.

From conditions and influences like these our own age has inherited much of its sensual weakness, its morbid sentimentalism and its tendency to cruelty and crime. Authority has been exalted above truth and reason, and the laws of moral conduct have been made of secondary moment to mere speculative belief and the misleading assurance that mistakes in life and lapses from morals could be balanced by a little prayer to God, to his son or his mother; or by an auricular confession to a priest, for a money consideration.

This attitude of the Church toward demon-

strable truth, to unrevealed religion, is fundamentally and fatally wrong. It says, practically: "Our creed does not square with facts or with reason, but that makes it so much the worse for the facts, and as for human reason that must be discarded whenever it questions religious authority! No matter if that authority says 'Come, let us reason together,' or, 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.'"

It is claimed that we owe society and civilization to the Church: and it is asked "what would the world be without Christianity?" It is quite unnecessary to ask, "What would Christianity be without science," if we mean by the former, the dominion of the Church. It can be seen in Armenia, in Abyssinia, Russia, Austria, Spain and Italy to-day, though recent relief from the temporal power of the Pope has given a new impetus to freedom and civilization in the last-named country. If the rule of a Church gave moral, orderly society, those nations should have been the most advanced nations of the earth, instead of being as they are in the lowest ranks of all, in the humanities and amenities of social life. No! revealed religion, as presented by the Church, never has and never can reform the world. Its influence has been corrupting, not purifying: disintegrating and antagonistic, not unifying and harmonizing. It has itself been greatly modified, humanized and rationalized within the past four hundred years, by the science and free thought of the world, which has sought in the fields of positive knowledge the grounds of ethical and spiritual truth, and in demonstration, that unwritten law of the universe, which governs human relations, rights and duties.

In uncivilized lands, revealed religion has no salutary effects, by the admission of its own missionaries, until methods of a higher civilization have been applied and the natives have been



taught industry, economy and the social virtues. The teaching of traditional theology to unlearned and sensitive peoples is seen to be demoralizing in its feverish excitements and temporary awakenings, followed by indifference and relapse. The consequence of the Church's doctrine of the Messiah, is aptly illustrated by the spread of Mormonism, the oft-recurring epidemic of Adventism, in the pretensions of numerous modern messiahs, like Schweinfurth, and in late lamentable Indian outbreaks. All these illustrations show how certain revealed religion by itself tends to mislead and inflate human beings, when not subjected to the calm tests of experience and positive methods of thought. The revealed is never to supercede the unrevealed or demonstrable. However serviceable or consoling it may be to the individual, its authority ends with the person, and can not rightly or safely be imposed upon another. The unrevealed, demonstrable truth, which is attained by observation of facts or evolved from knowledge of the operation of Nature's laws, must be allowed to interpret and make plain all good contained in any symbol, figure or authoritative utterance, in any sacred word or book.

You need have no fear that any truth will be ever lost. It is the spirit of authority, not of investigation, which obscures and seeks to suppress truth. But, we are told, this unrevealed religion leads nowhere! Rather, it leads everywhere. It explains all myths and allegories; settles or illumines all doubtful questions. That mind is in no attitude to accept truth which first determines a subject or allows a church to determine it for him and then proceeds to investigate it. Why need we be dogmatic about what *is to be*? "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy." To both the dogmatic religionist and to the dogmatic materialist, we may say: You have by no means sounded

to their depths or heights, or lengths or breadths the mysteries of all being. To bow to any authority, however ancient or modern or spiritual or physical, is really to turn our backs on truth: is to cease to grow as moral and intelligent beings.

There can no harm arise to one for acknowledging his ignorance of special subjects by his efforts to learn something yet unknown. Herein is seen the difference between the honest searcher after truth, and the interested advocate of "plans of salvation," schemes and theories claimed to be derived from special utterances of infinite wisdom, but which ever bear the ear-marks of human assumption or stupidity, and are generally the devices of an organized conspiracy to dominate human thought, suppress candid inquiry and perpetuate the dependence of the poor and uninformed.

What need to dispraise the small comfort and consolation to be derived from natural and unrevealed religion, which points to "living for others" as a true source of happiness, and to benevolence and truth seeking as the surest means of relief from sorrow, or seeks to lead men to require demonstrable proof of a supernal life? Why refuse to listen to the Agnostic because he is honest and brave enough to tell you he does not *know* to be true, what the Church asserts to be true, without proof? She asserts things upon a strained interpretation of a book, compiled from a large number of manuscripts and as many writers, we know not whom. Some of these were written, we know not when or where, nor even in what language. They were voted canonical by a bare majority of a council, after two thirds of its members had been expelled by the fiat of a half-converted pagan emperor. The four Gospels were selected from a score or two of others and decreed the "Word of God" to the exclusion of all the rest, by a show of hands of unlearned, bigoted and exasperated priests, though unquestionably they

were originally written without any thought on the part of the writers that they were ever to be used as sacred books, and though many passages, and even whole chapters are held by the most competent critics to have been interpolated hundreds of years after the events they claim to describe could have taken place.

And authority thus derived we are told must stand against the moral convictions and spiritual intuitions of great and good men of all ages and all climes who earnestly sought to know rather the unwritten "will of God" than the dictum of musty parchments, made or often altered at the behests of irresponsible power, not for the purpose of freeing mankind from tyranny, ignorance and error, but to enslave and degrade them. The truthful man tells you frankly he does not know all about God and heaven and hell; even questions with the friend of Job whether by "searching you can find out God," at all. As to a spiritual existence and life hereafter, he does not think that can be determined by a balancing of texts "*pro and con*," since an abundance of them can be found in the Bible to prove or to disprove it. And this same conflict of authority will be found in relation to temperance, chastity and every subject of morals as well.

The candid man may have hopes and doubts as to futurity; but he is usually resigned to what is, to the will of God or to the inevitable. If there be a future life, it will be because *it is*, and not because it can be established by the authority of a council (as the synod voted regenerate infants out of hell), or by any metaphysical syllogisms from assumed premises.

We are imploringly asked: "If you take away Christianity, what have you to give in its place?" My dear friends, Christianity can not be taken from any one who has any of it worth keeping. Just imagine taking it away from Stephen,

Peter, Paul, or John the beloved disciple and writer of Revelations. Such are not open to a bargain. He who is under the influence of the life of our spiritual "elder brother," has no thought of giving any of it up. It is more of the same kind that he requires, not an exchange for something different. It is not for such that a greater and more intellectual religion is needed, but for those who have been driven to reject everything bearing the semblance of religion, by the utter untruthfulness of "the Church machine" as Father McGlynn terms it, by her doctrine of an exclusive heaven, her torture house and prison of endless fire. With his hope in an endless torment for others, in the "pearly gates" admitting to a close corporation, there also has died out of his mind all tendency to take longer on trust statements of any kind, and he now demands positive demonstration of all assertions. For this surely the Church is unprepared and her impotence to reach or benefit him is clearly shown.

It is no longer a question whether the world shall have a revealed religion, interpreted or misinterpreted by the Church, or a more rational development of that faith "which works by love and purifies the heart," but of which the Church has lost the key, but whether it shall have any at all. The Church has ceased to minister to the spiritual wants of men. Eighteen and a half centuries she has thrived on her ever unredeemed promise to bring on earth a kingdom of peace and good will to men. In the name of the "Prince of Peace," she glorifies fratricidal war. To-day every Christian government in Europe, which rules by her invented fiction of "divine right," stands armed to the teeth, ready to "cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war," on the slightest occasion for maintaining overgrown privilege and power. Priests form processions and chant *Te Deums* for victories over nations professing the same faith and to

celebrate the slaughter of kindred people and the ravage of their country. Nations with "God in their constitutions" go deliberately to war with each other, invoking the assistance of the same denominational God in destroying lives and devastating homes.

No! We owe little to the Church. She long ago attained senility, second childhood. Her influence now is to disease and death. Progress in civil and religious freedom is indebted to her in no way. We live in a country with some degree of civil and religious freedom, not because of the "Bulls of Popes," or "the thunders of the Vatican," the "Westminster Catechism," the Augsburg Confession, or the "Thirty-nine Articles," but because of our National Declaration of Independence. Not to Cotton Mather or Jonathan Edwards are we indebted for freedom but to Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine.

The priesthood of the Church in Spain is asking now the re-establishment of "the Holy Inquisition, that Infidels and heretics may be adequately punished." And in this country they demand the enactment of laws enforcing the observance of the pagan Sunday as a Jewish Sabbath, without any justification from the Bible or any sanction of the early Church. They seek to disqualify citizens who will not take a religious oath, though Jesus prohibited oaths. The recognition of God in the Constitution is demanded that so rulers, appealing to his authority, may no longer heed the voice of the people. My friends, I am speaking here to-night, not from any voluntary sufferance of the Church, but simply because she no longer has power to prevent me or to send me to the stake if I persist.

Will we not be admonished by all this that we must test all pretense of authority by the teachings of personal experience and the careful

analysis of those doctrines which claim to elevate and ennoble the mind. "The kingdom of God is within you," or for you it is not at all. If you find not peace and comfort and hope in seeking those for whom you may live and labor, I think you will find little that is satisfactory in the dogmas and mummeries of a church, which thus deludes the external sense by holding the words of promise to the ear while breaking them to the hope: enticing you to endow her with your earthly goods, the result of your patient toil, in exchange for a "treasure in heaven" she will prove unable to deliver. Were not the Church already a spiritual bankrupt, there would have arisen no need for the doubter and Agnostic to offer his poor comfort to those whom the husks of authority can no longer satisfy. It is not because the Liberal has so little, but because he has so much to offer that the outcry is made. The Church has on hand her damaged stock of miracles and charms to dispose of, and can not endure the least rivalry of clean goods in her business. While men lie prone in the ignorance and superstition she has promoted, she can make a gainful show of her "Holy Coat of Treves," and her numerous cast-off garments and relics of a Christ who was "dead and buried" more than eighteen centuries ago. She has covered the living Christ so deep beneath her crumbling creeds and spiritless ceremonies and externalisms that the humanity of the nineteenth century can not find him.

She must reverse her attitude to truth or pass away. Her revealed religion is hereafter to be interpreted by the unrevealed, "the law written in the hearts" and intelligible to the reason and experience of men. That all revelation must be interpreted by the demonstrable and positive is so plain it can hardly require illustration. Words are the expressions of thoughts, thoughts the concepts of things. We judge of a man's words by

his deeds. Language, written or spoken, is subject to many shades of meaning. The reverence all freely render to the Nazarene (the Church can only secure a formal one) is due to what he did, not to what he said. Is it irreverent to apply the same rule to what claims to be from God. "What is written" no longer gains the mastery over men's minds which it held during the childhood of the race. History and experience bring us into direct contact with his unrevealed will, which is found in the unvarying sequences of things.

I am aware of the common plea of our teachers of special intervention that God is a sovereign, and has a right to reveal himself in his own way, and we must not question him or say, "What doest thou?" That is not at all the question I am putting; but am simply asking, What *has* he revealed, and what is the canon of interpretation he has instituted? Is the universe to conform to words, or the words to the universe? It is not the rationalist but the supernaturalist who has prescribed rules and conditions, possibilities and probabilities, by which to determine what is or is not his word.

John Austin, the great English writer on the Science of Law, lays the foundation for the science by defining law as "a command from a superior to an inferior." From this premise as a loyal subject he argues the superior and divine right of kings. As a good orthodox man also he traces all law ultimately back to God as the fountain head. He was, however, too good a logician and too reverent to fact to accept even the "ten commandments" as "laws proper." He goes on to show that "God has set laws, revealed and unrevealed," and that "the unrevealed form a canon of interpretation to the revealed." The unrevealed law he claims to be the law of "the greatest good," and that by this the character of all laws, divine or human, are to be interpreted. He thinks that man

comes into a knowledge of this law through experience, and exact understanding of the nature and uses of human conduct, and that all laws enacted by the State or claimed to be revealed from God are true and binding laws only as they are interpreted by this canon, and are found to result in promoting the happiness and well being of mankind.

This rule must be still more imperative in the interpretation of those laws of spiritual growth and life, revelations of which were faintly shadowed forth in the early traditions of our race, through inspirations of peculiarly ecstatic minds, and which when innocently employed have served as introductory to clearer thought and more manly growth. A hundred years since, this nation abjured the "divine right of kings," and of all rulers claiming authority other than "the consent of the governed." We have travelled very far away from that standard. Our government is little more than a police force to regulate the people in the interests of their taskmasters, our American plutocracy. It is even now preparing to treat for the surrender of free speech and freedom in religion to the Church, which is seeking alliance with the State that she may maintain her waning power, plunder the poor, and share supremacy with Mammon.

To the unrevealed religion, that which springs from a normal love of truth and justice and of freedom, the race owes all its material, social and spiritual progress. Conspicuous among the practical teachers is the Jesus of Nazareth, apotheosized by a priesthood saturated with Grecian mythology and subservient to the despotic power of imperial Rome. The Church has preferred a claim to a monopoly of his life and doctrine, and sought to sever him from his relation to humanity, and so make him the property of an oligarchy, to be parcelled out to deluded victims, and create



an exclusive traffic in Christian spiritual things and in God as well. The Jesus as he appears to our simple reason, is a brother and lover of our race: an exemplar, we may reverently acknowledge. He made or authorized *no written revelation* of truth. He lived it as it appeared to him. He attracted to himself the common people, "the publicans and sinners," as the pharisees avowed. He founded no church. That invention of Rome about Peter and the rock, is too thin a forgery to deceive any but willing dupes.\* The chain of "Apostolic succession" snaps at the first link and fails to connect with him. Nor does he intimate a creed of any kind, except trust in God and in himself as a devotee of truth. His life was not a revelation of a thing, but the thing itself; as different as is the picture of a rose from the actual opening bud. The picture may be beautiful to the eye, but will become dim with age, and has no fragrance. Only the real and reproducing rose is entirely satisfactory. Religion we shall continue to have of some kind, if only irreligion. God will be revered, though it be in the form of a stone, stock, cat, cow, or of a man or of a book, or of a negation, a no-God, "a bit of nothing surrounded by space." Man can never lose his admiration of the useful, the beautiful and mysterious. Geology has by no means destroyed the longing which Genesis attempted to gratify, but only extended and broadened to us the mystery of

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\* The only other reference in the Gospels (Matt. viii. 17) to any church, whatever, is doubtless to a congregation or commune, although its close proximity to the binding and loosing prerogative "on earth and in heaven," indicates a possibility of priestly tampering with the text. It is plain, however, that the references here and in the Acts, where it is said "Saul made havoc with the Church," etc., apply to the community of believers and not to any hierarchy whatever. The Church as I have defined it had no existence for centuries after. Though it may have grown from beginnings in the first century, no connection can be shown logically or historically, with the central figure of the gospels, whose name it wears with such brazen assurance.

the universe and of our own existence. The rainbow is not less beautiful and wonderful to me than to Noah, or to the aborigines, because I understand something of optics and the refraction of light. The rose is not less attractive because botany has taught us to analyze and classify it. The Good of Truth, whether we worship it as an entity or as a personality, or conceive of it as impersonal, is an ever-living and persistent principle man can never cease to revere and admire. And his growth in knowledge and progress in all things refining and elevating to his nature will be promoted, not retarded, by the true but unrevealed, and as yet "unloved religion." "The Religion of Progress."







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[The following chapters are introductory to a series of Essays under the title of "SOCIAL INDUSTRY." The first of this Series will appear in the May number of FAIR PLAY. The March and April numbers will contain Mr. Ingalls' Address on "The Unrevealed Religion." EDITOR FAIR PLAY.]

## INTRODUCTION.

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### EQUALITY IN WAGES.

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The real question, between those who work and those who exploit their earnings, is the existing disparity of wages. All production of wealth is co-operative, directly, or through exchange. The natural wages of labor, the entire wealth produced, are now divided between the landholder, capitalist and worker. In order to obtain what even an orthodox political economist calls "a rude kind of equity," any exchange of equivalents, assumes freedom from restraint, on the part of either party, intellectual responsibility, general acquaintance with values, and tolerable honesty of purpose.

Now the man who exchanges the product of his labor, for the privilege of doing it, is paying tribute to privilege, and the price of no service or thing, for we must never lose sight of the fact that one's person, place and opportunity belong to himself, are really his property as much as the product of his labor. For they are a part of the universe which his vitality has moved and utilized as truly as the commodity he has produced. The soil he tills, the place and home where he dwells and works, "belongs to him in usufruct," as truly even as the muscular tissues he employs in labor, of which he owns the temporary use only. If his brain and muscle are property, which no other can claim, so is his home and physical environment. The province of exchange then is limited to those things which his ability has created outside of himself, and which can be transferred without destroy-

ing his personality or depriving himself of opportunity.

Between property in occupied land and property in vacant land, between voluntary and involuntary service, between persistent and variable values, the distinction is so wide and marked that it can be ignored only at the peril of all social well being.

Inequality in the wages of men existed before land monopoly or even slavery, which was yet older. Both of these barbaric dominations were devised to render perpetual such inequalities as at first normally arose between ignorant and inexperienced parties, but which left to themselves would have been self-corrective, through a series of alternations, tending constantly to equilibrium.

The abolition of slavery has set free these tendencies, so far as they were affected by ownership of the persons of other men. Abolition of the dominion over another's land (vacant land ownership) would do vastly more to equalize the wages of mankind, but it is only as man shall grow in the exact knowledge of economical and ethical law, that the monstrous inequalities of social and industrial life will rapidly recede till they become lost in those gentle undulations necessary to prevent utter stagnation and inactivity.

I desire to get this general subject before the thinking workers, and to direct their attention to matters illustrating the tendency of exact economic law, in the absence of unjust class legislation, to reduce all unearned wages, now paid to landlord, banker or speculator, to a vanishing point.

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THE SOURCE OF INCREASE; ITS IDENTITY, IN ALL  
FORMS, ECONOMIC OR MONOPOLISTIC.

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Taking a look beyond the confusing polemics of social or political science and its bewildering terminology, let us institute an inquiry into the actual facts of wealth production, and carefully note what takes place as a result of associated industrial effort.

Given the two factors, "Man and the Land,"



we find that the active agent is only able to labor while the waste of his system in such labor is sustained by necessary food, raiment and shelter, and that the land is only able to yield as its elements are returned to it. It is also necessary that the man should be able to rear a family, so that the industrial force may not decline for want of new workers to take the place of those whose powers fail from age or other causes.

Now it is a well attested fact that where the land is free, or comparatively so, and not subject to the payment of rent, the early settler with little capital other than his trained hands is able not only to sustain his life but to produce in a single season enough to support him for several seasons. It is also an established fact that the average worker under such conditions produces enough to support himself with the average family, and have left at the end of the year quite as much as he has consumed. This surplus then is the economic *increase* due to labor which under the different names of profit, interest or rent, is now exploited through various pretences and devices, by the landlord and other legally privileged orders from the ignorance and defenseless position of the laborer.

It must be remembered, however, that this surplus product is in part owing to reciprocal aids received and returned between himself and neighbors, and in more general circulation to facilities for exchanging and transporting his commodities for other needed things produced by others; for his labor however isolated then becomes social and co-operative, and so more effective.

Upon this excess produced by labor over cost of support depended in past generations the very existence of chattel slavery. Had the cost of slave labor at any time exceeded or even equalled the gross product, that form of slavery must have ceased from the direct operation of economic law. That it was approaching that state when abolished at the behest of moral sentiment, or rather to meet the exigencies of the State or the military necessity, is probable, for it was hard pressed by the more effective wages system of labor, made indirectly com-

pulsory by class ownership of the other, the passive factor of production, the land. It is well known that in all slave countries the land rapidly loses fertility.

Now if the system of chattelism were impossible when labor under it yielded no surplus, so the entire capitalistic incomes of rent, interest and profits must cease, the moment the employment of labor ceases to be productive beyond the cost of its support, and all our legalized machinery and class institutions will become then as useless as a vacuum pump in a dry well. In the field of more independent self-employment, the truth of this position is quite as apparent. Were the worker alone in the world, a single failure to meet the necessities of his existence would end in the extinction of the man and of his type. Is not then the increase of wealth in every form dependent on this single fact that labor applied to land or to things derived from the land is able to exceed in production what such labor absorbs in consumption?

All matters involved in superintendence, in distribution and in exchange, come under the head of labor, and are subject to the same economic law, as other aids in co-operative production. Unless such labor adds to production more than it takes away, it could not economically survive, in any department except where favored by cunning class rule enforcing predatory contributions. And this must be true of every occupation or calling of men, whatever; whether of mere muscular toil, of skilled or artistic work, of director's function, management of domain, of plant, of merchandise, or of money and exchange. As to the ownership of this increase no ethical or economic concept can be logically admitted, except on the assumption that each possesses *that share of the increase which his services over cost have earned*. In any civil or moral determination of the questions involved in trade, or general laws of business, priority must be given to the question of ownership. To whom does the profits of social industry belong? After the cost of the keep of the laborer is deducted, (which we see must be done under any system of slavery, serfdom

or capitalism) the "lord of the land" enters his claim: "The increase is mine as owner of the domain and (if also a slaveholder) the laborer." And by law the land is his and the rent is his under law and under law alone. Next comes the speculative trader: "I have assisted in this production, by promoting exchange. After the cost of labor is paid, and the landlord gets his rent there is still a surplus left. That belongs to me." "But stop," says the money lender: "Your ability to work your 'racket' is altogether due to the money I lent you to corner the market with. I must have my interest." And so political economists, to make a show of equalness to all parties have divided the productions of labor into four distinct parts: "Wages," (living cost while working), "Rent, Interest and Profit." They thus unceremoniously quarter upon unconscious labor three nearly useless classes, as prime factors. It does not need to mention the various devices to increase the spoil, through tariffs, patent rights, etc. All profits however named are found, in the last analysis, to depend wholly upon the ability of the worker to produce more than his cost of living.

Now as regards any actual, useful service any of these parties may render to the co-operative work, in production, distribution or exchange, they are justly entitled to share. But under our class laws, the shares going to the exploiters are not for services of this kind but of an opposite character; to prevent production, defeat distribution and interrupt the circulations of exchange, which in the absence of discriminating laws would go smoothly on, each renderer of service receiving his proper share of the general increase of wealth.

When the landholder keeps his soil up to the economic requirement by expenditure of labor in returning the fertile elements and yields full opportunity to labor; should he inherit or have rightfully secured the occupation of land of superior quality, and wisely employed himself in promoting production, not only a comfortable support during the time employed but a proportionate share of the products of the industry are rightfully his. And it

does not matter whether this share is termed wages or is called profits or interest or rent; it is all the same thing, the surplus of wages. The ethical and economic requirements are the same, being based on the ground of the greatest social good. Whatever defeats these ends violates both morals and economy.

At present, the whole surplus of agricultural production, over a precarious living for the laborer, is taken by the landlord, and those who hold under him, as sub-tenants or farmers. The money holder, through loans on mortgages, or by direct purchase of land buys into this legalized privilege, and so shares in pirating the natural profits. The ability to do this greatly strengthens and extends the capitalistic power of money over the surplus in all other forms of industry and exchange; so that the lords of land and of money absorb more than one-half of the entire products of all social industry, the competitive wages of labor, superintendence and general management and the decay and wear of plant have to be paid from the remainder. Superintendence and much skilled labor, necessarily are paid a just proportion and often more than that, but as a consequence the wages of the agriculturalist, and of most employes of whom little skill is required, are correspondingly reduced far below any rational conception of "a comfortable living," while many quite willing to work are left to involuntary idleness and consequent suffering, degeneracy and crime.

No logical solution can ever be arrived at in any department of social science unless there be first recognized a single source to all increase in social wealth, viz., the product which labor effects above what it consumes. It appears also equally necessary to admit that where increase naturally arises under economic law, it is simply the wages of labor and needs no legislation to establish or regulate it. For if in connection with superior fertility of soil, or of favorable location for exchange, or shrewd interpretation of supply and demand, of superior strength or skill, these wages may appear at times very unequal — inevitable and constantly

occurring changes and a general freedom to engage in new and varied industries will reduce these disparities to a minimum, as may hereafter be more fully shown and illustrated.



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